

J U L Y

at the

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

JULY MEETING

Date: Wednesday, July 15, 8:15 p.m.
Place: Morrison Auditorium
Subject: "MAN OF ARAN"

The enthusiastic reception by the Academy membership to two of Robert Flaherty's earlier documentaries, "Nanook of the North" and "Moana", has encouraged the booking of a third, "Man of Aran."

Made in 1934, this was Mr. Flaherty's first sound film. He took his camera to the barren island of Aran off the west coast of Ireland. At first the inhabitants were shy and suspicious. Gradually, as had happened with "Nanook" and "Moana", the eminent director won them over. They discovered that motion pictures were a medium through which they could express themselves and show the world what sort of people they were. Essentially, "Aran" is the story of man struggling against the elements for his existence. Highlights include putting out to sea in their "currags", watching basking shark, braving a formidable storm.

"Man of Aran" was voted the best picture of the year by the National Board of Review. Critics called it "a beautiful film... superior in every way...of consummate beauty...a visual masterpiece...epic quality...overwhelming climax."

MORRISON PLANETARIUM

July 1 through Labor Day: "MOON LANDING!", Morrison's summer spectacular. Many new projectors create a host of stunning effects in this simulated journey through outer space to the moon where audiences witness an eclipse of the sun by the earth. An exciting adventure for the entire family.

Summer show schedule: Daily at 11:30 a.m., 1, 2:15 and 3:30 p.m. Evening performances, Wednesday through Sunday, at 8:30. The Planetarium is closed on Monday and Tuesday evenings.

Adults, 75¢; Juniors, 40¢.

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

Exhibit of the Month: "PANGOLIN", the scaly anteater. From the Academy collections. Main Foyer, Science Museum.

"LIFE BENEATH THE SEA". Photographs in color of some of the subaqueous wonders that lie below the waves, principally of specimens of California coastal marine life. The undersea photos are the work of Nate Lawrence and Helmut Stellrecht. Lovell White Hall of Man and Nature. Through September 7.

NEWS and NOTES

At the invitation of the U.S. Geological Survey, Dr. G Dallas Hanna, Curator of the Department of Geology, is now assisting in a detailed study of the effect of the Alaskan earthquake of March 27 on the intertidal zone in and about Prince William Sound. Dr. Hanna, with his wife Margaret, departed the Academy in mid-May to join others in the project.

Excerpts from a postal card written by "Doc" on June 2 are of more than usual interest: "Now on our way from Port Chalmers to McLeod Bay, Montague Island. We have worked this island for two days because here is a part of the key to the quake. The south end is elevated about 43 feet. A 15 foot displacement fault has wrecked a lot of timber and Alaska has gained hundreds of square miles of territory...The catastrophic destruction of animal and plant life on the littoral zone is total. A total new zone will have to be formed...I have collected much critical material connected with zonation but cannot possibly do a thorough job. In a week or so we will be in a port and I will start shipping packages."

The Hannas plan to remain in Alaska until September.

Two young California scientists have been named the recipients of research grants awarded by the Academy and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Chris Parrish, a third year biology student at San Diego State College will use his grant to carry out studies of the scorpions of the islands of the Gulf of California, Mexico. Advisers on his project are Dr. Willis J. Gertsch of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and Dr. Edward S. Ross, Curator of the Department of Entomology at the Academy.

Allen Greer, a senior student at Stanford, was awarded the second grant which will allow him to pursue a herpetologic field project in western Mexico. His efforts will be under the supervision of Dr. Alan E. Leviton, Curator of the Department of Herpetology, CAS.

Two thousand California trees now grace the Okinawan landscape due to a heart-warming project called "Trees for Koza." The goodwill program began about a year ago with the United States Air Force at Kadena Air Base with the assistance of Governor Edmund G. Brown, the purpose being to obtain California seedlings and trees to replace those destroyed during World War II.

The Academy has been involved from the outset. The first arrivals in Okinawa in July 1963 were 100 redwood trees and 15 varieties of pine seeds from the Strybing Arboretum Society and the CAS. Many other California organizations were subsequently involved and the project has been declared an overwhelming success.

Through the Mayor of Koza, Mr. Chojo Oyama, the people of the city expressed their appreciation in a traditional manner by presenting the Academy with a handsome Bembo lacquer tray, offering "our sincere gratitude for your thoughtfulness and goodwill."

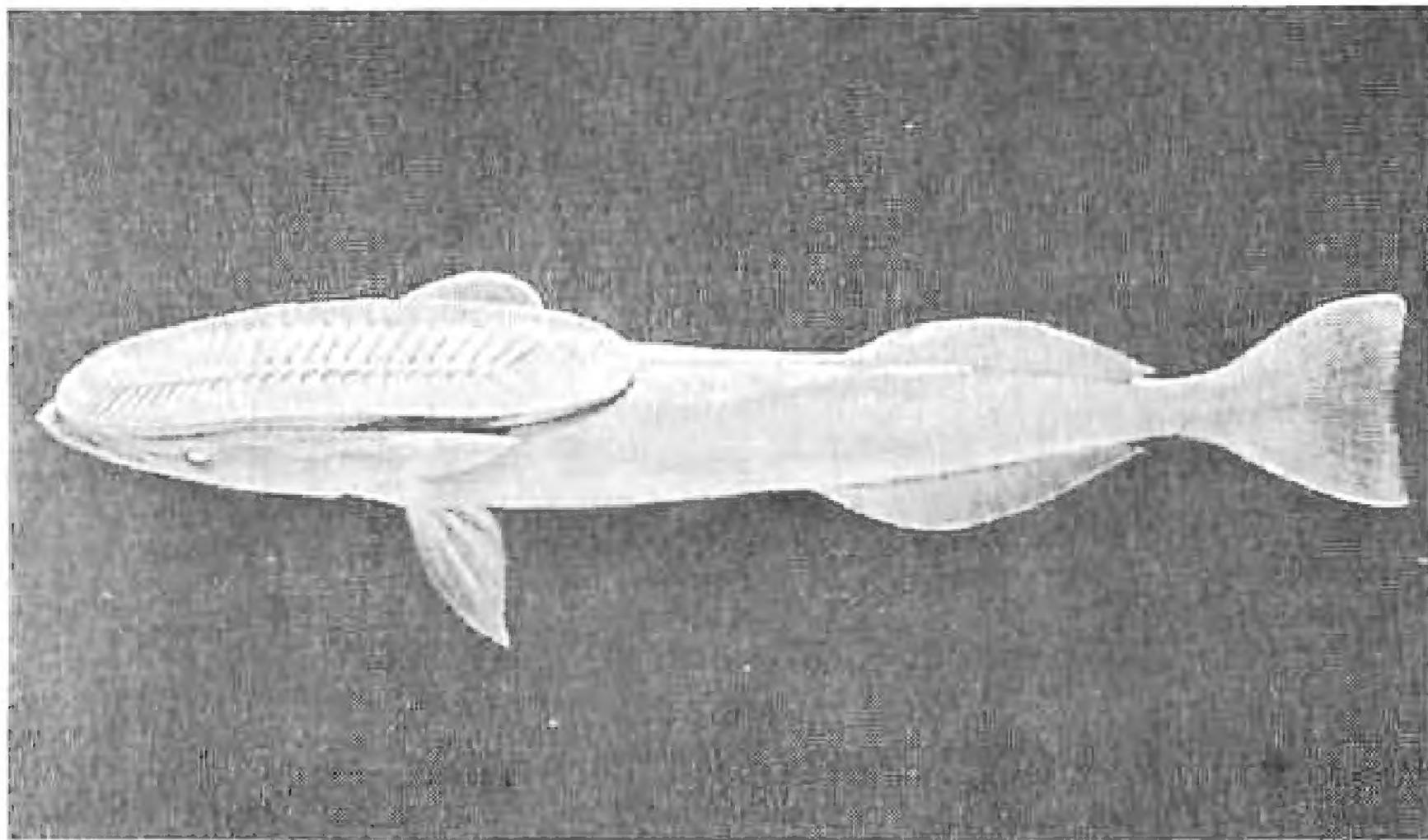
After three months of travel, most of which was by air, Dr. Edward S. Ross, Curator of the Department of Entomology, has returned to the Academy from his most recent expedition into the field to gather collections and data for his world-wide monograph on Embioptera, the strange insects related to termites which spin silk with their front feet. Investigated in his trip: Many diverse biological zones of South America.

With his 14 year-old son Clark who accompanied him on his Asian and Australian "insect safaris", Dr. Ross began work in the forested northern range of Trinidad, then proceeded to the Amazon's delta region. Traveling by air enabled him to spend at least two or three days in each vegetative zone of the tropical region of the continent. Of one of his stops he commented, "The Amazon forest may be a 'green hell' to some people, but it is a 'green heaven' to a naturalist!"

Brasilia and its savannas were followed by Rio de Janeiro ("One of the few cities in the world set in an amphitheatre of tropical forest.") Then inland to Itataiai and by bus to Sao Paulo and Curitiba where he collected in Auricaria forests. From Curitiba, he took many excursions, the farthest being to southern portions of the state of Santa Catarina. Iguassú Falls was next on the itinerary; then across Paraguay to Asunción; Corrientes, Argentina; Tucuman in northwest Argentina; northward to Santa Cruz, Bolivia, and subsequently across the Andes to Lima.

(Continued on reverse)

From the Academy Collections



Among the myriad of fishes with specialized organs, the small group known as remoras are remarkable for a suction disc that covers the top of the head. By its suction disc, a remora attaches itself to some large pelagic creature, and is then carried about until it detaches itself by releasing that suction -- as it may do to feed on scraps left by its "host." (Recent evidence indicates that some remoras feed on parasites of the host and on minute organisms of the plankton.) Certain kinds of remoras attach themselves to sharks, and are known as sharksuckers; others attach themselves to marlins, and are called marlinsuckers. Yet another kind, the whalesucker, almost invariably attaches itself to whales or porpoises (though one individual was found on a floating oar in the Mediterranean Sea).

The suction disc of a remora is an oval structure which has evolved by a remarkable transformation of the spinous dorsal fin; Each dorsal spine has divided and its two parts have bent outward, forming a series of transverse plates like the slats of a venetian blind -- which the plates further resemble in being capable of tipping at a greater or lesser angle. These plates are beset with minute prickles, which in combination with the vacuum created by the tipping of the plates, enable the fish to adhere to any flattish surface so firmly that it can hardly be dislodged although it can release itself instantly.

More than a century after the whalesucker became known to science, eight specimens were recovered from a blue whale that had been harpooned off the Farallon Islands. These whalesuckers were dark blue in life, their color matching that of the blue whale that had been their host. They were generously presented to the Department of Ichthyology by Mr. Gaeton Caito, of the Western California Fish Company. They are the first examples of this species known from California waters.

Photo and Text by W. I. Follett

(Above: Whalesucker, Remilegia australis (Bennett), from a blue whale harpooned off Farallon Islands.)

(News and Notes Continued)

At Lima he was joined by Academy Patron H. Vannoy Davis (see NEWSLETTER, June 1964). From Lima, Dr. Ross drove a rented car over the 16,000 mile pass near Oroya down to the town of Tingo Maria, his objective being to photograph the oil bird caves. After returning to Lima, the party flew back to Trinidad via Rio and the Belem region. Dr. Ross then proceeded to Washington, D. C. and commitments there.

He returned to the Academy with 175 cultures of Embioptera which will supply living material to augment the use of chromosomes as an aid in the classification of these insects.

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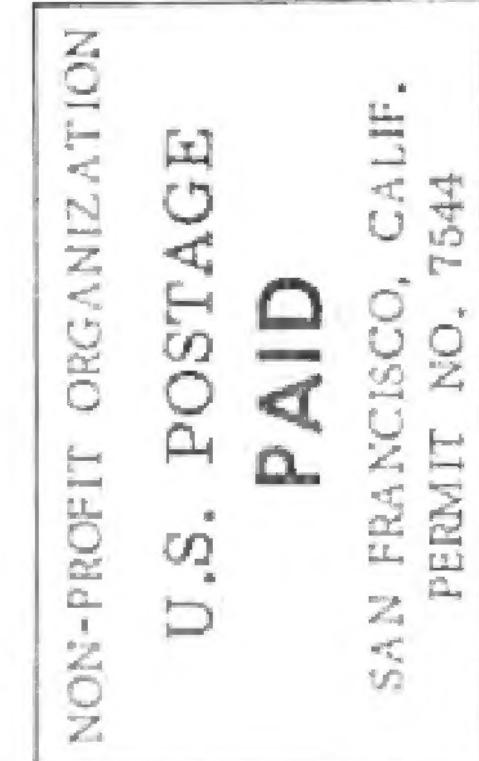
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Academy NEWSLETTER

THE CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
GOLDEN GATE PARK
SAN FRANCISCO 18

Open every day of the year 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Admission Free

No. 295 - Published Monthly by the
CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
GOLDEN GATE PARK
SAN FRANCISCO 18
JULY 1964